

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 and 24-51 are pending, with claim 23 canceled and claims 31-51 added by this paper.

Specification Objections

Applicants have made the amendments to the specification as suggested by the Examiner, consequently, applicants respectfully submit that these objections should be withdrawn.

Claim Objections, Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and Claim Amendments

Claims 7, 16, 21 and 27 stand objected, and claims 10, 15 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicants have amended these claims to obviate these objections and rejections, or have canceled the claim, e.g., claim 23, and presented its substantive features in a new claim, e.g., claim 45. Consequently, applicants respectfully submit that these objections and rejections should be withdrawn.

In addition, applicants have made amendments to the claims to conform them to U.S. prosecution practice. Applicants respectfully submit that none of these amendments, including those made to obviate the objections and rejections, narrow the scope of the claims.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-2, 8-9, 14, 16-21 and 24-30 stand rejected as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2002/0028389 A1 (Sonoda) as further evidenced by U.S. Patent Nos. 3,884,723 and 6,500,575. Applicants note that Sonoda has a 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) date of

July 10, 2001. Applicants submit herewith a verified English translation of German priority application No. 100 55 811.9 having a filing date of 10 November 2000.

In view of the above, favorable reconsideration is courteously requested. If there are any remaining issues which can be expedited by a telephone conference, the examiner is courteously invited to telephone counsel at the number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this response or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-3402.

Respectfully submitted,

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